

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Missionaries commissioned in Jackson

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

A total of 68 new missionaries were commissioned May 20 before thousands of onlookers at First Church, Jackson, in what is believed to be the first such North American Mission Board (NAMB) service in Mississippi.

In a Sunday morning worship service that reverberated with prayer and celebration, the missionaries were challenged to be soul-winners by Frank Pollard, First Church's senior pastor, and NAMB president Robert Reccord.

"Never lose heart," Reccord told the missionaries in his sermon from Hebrews 12. He praised the missionaries for

answering God's call to make a difference in the world. SPECIAL PRAYER — Congregants at First Church, Jackson, lay hands on new North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionaries Wayne and Rita Snyder during a special prayer time at the May 20 NAMB missionary commissioning service at First Church. The Snyders will serve as church planters in Alberta, Canada. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Illustrating the analogy of running a race as described by the writer of Hebrews in chapter 12, Reccord said the race is "only for those who have come to the point of saying, 'Jesus I need you. I surrender my life to you.'"

"Those are the ones in the race," he pointed out.

Reccord encouraged the missionaries to look to the great cloud of witnesses described in the first verses of Hebrews 12.

"The writer is talking about those who have already run the race," and are present to cheer on the runners, Reccord said, mentioning such biblical

icons as Noah, Moses, Nehemiah, and Peter.

"My job as a Christian is not to outrun you; my job is to finish alongside you," he added.

Reccord also urged the new missionaries to stay the course when the going gets tough.

"Belief in the Word of God, no matter what the circumstances look like — that's what faith is all about," he said.

The commissioning service included a number of musical pieces, including an inspirational version of the song, Carry the Light, with the combined voices of First Church's Sanctuary Choir, Promise Choir for young people, Children's Ensemble, and a duet by Sanctuary Choir members Sam Mason and Sherry Stegall.

The Sanctuary Choir also performed the song, Lift Up the Lamb, with full orchestra, herald trumpets, and banners.

Randy Wood, NAMB director of missionary personnel, read Scripture just before Reccord presented each new missionary

with their commissioning certificate as they introduced themselves to attendees.

Jorge Melendez and Ted and Carolyn Stephens, all new missionaries commissioned at the service, offered their testimonies of how God had led them to become North American missionaries.

A special feature of the service was the presentation by Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church, of a check for \$103,000 to Reccord, signifying the church's record gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. The church has a strong history of setting giving records in support of Southern Baptist missions.

At a luncheon held in honor of the new missionaries in the church's Fellowship Hall East immediately after the commissioning service, Reccord presented Pollard with a custom tabletop exhibit of the flags of all the countries and territories for which NAMB has responsibility for reaching people with the Gospel.

At the luncheon, Reccord used a more personal tone to exhort the missionaries. CONGRATULATIONS — Frank Pollard (right), senior pastor of First Church, Jackson, commends Juan Cintron, who along with his wife Yanina (left) will serve as North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionaries in Puerto Rico. The Cintrons were appointed during the May 20 NAMB missionary commissioning service at the church. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

new missionaries not to lose touch with themselves, their spouses, and their families when the pressures of ministry surround them.

"Guard your heart. Be careful what goes into your heart through your eyes and mind. The adversary is looking for whom he can destroy.

"Fan the flames of your marriage; when the last spark goes out, it is very hard to start it up again.

"Do the work of evangelism, and model what you are asking other people to do. Start in your own home," he admonished the missionaries.

The North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the combination of three agencies that were consolidated under a 1997 reorganization plan: Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and

Radio and Television Commission.

With income of \$119,580,999, NAMB has primary responsibility for ministries in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Northern Marianas Islands.

For more information on NAMB programs and opportunities for service, contact the board at 4200 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, GA 30202. Telephone: (770) 410-6000. Web site: www.namb.net.

For more photographs from the May 20 commissioning service, please see page 12.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

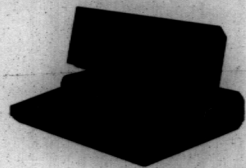
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Our careless words

The young man approached the village elder with a heavy heart. "Teacher, I have sinned against my neighbor," the young man said.

"In a fit of anger, I whispered untrue rumors to the itching ears in our small village, and now my neighbor's reputation has been ruined. How can I ever make recompense?" he asked.

The wise elder pondered the young man's predicament and finally said, "My son, I can see that you are sincere. Here is what you must do: after everyone has gone to sleep this evening, take with you a bag of feathers and place one feather on every doorstep in the village. Then return to me at first light."

The young man did exactly as the sage demanded. As soon as the sun rose the next morning, the young man sought out the elder.

"Teacher, I have done as you said. Not a doorstep in the entire village was overlooked. Now what must I do?" the young man asked.

"Go back to those doorsteps and retrieve every feather, and your burden will be lifted," the wise old man said.

"I cannot do that, teacher. All the feathers have been blown to the wind and I will cannot recover all of them," he replied.

"So it is with your words," said the teacher. "No matter how sincere the grief over your careless words, you can never retrieve all of them. It is a burden you must carry for the rest of your life."

The ancient tale of the young man and his careless words came to mind recently when a brother in Christ sought to share a vicious rumor about a fellow believer. My spirit sank, as I grasped the seeds of destruction sown in his words and also recalled how many times I have failed in the same regard.

Humans have taken great delight in spreading rumors, gossip, and innuendo since, well, since there have been humans. We like to listen to gossip, and the only

activity we enjoy more than listening to gossip is transmitting gossip to other people.

A whispered word here and a suggestive comment there, and pretty soon someone's reputation is ruined. It's sad that we don't seem to care any more than we do about the victims and their loved ones.

Why is that so? The third chapter of the Book of James holds some answers, as translated in the New International Version:

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts.

Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame his tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

Maybe Mississippi is no different than any other place, but it sure seems of late that we have had considerably more than our fair share of rumors, gossip, and innuendo, moving like a raging forest fire through both the Christian community and among unbelievers.

This should not be so. Unbelievers may not have the benefit of the Word of God, but Christians do — and what does

"HONEY, DON'T BOTHER MOMMY WITH YOUR LITTLE PROBLEMS! RICKI LAKE IS UP TO HER EARS IN FIGHTING TEENAGERS, JUDGE JUDI IS YELLING AT A GRANDMOTHER, AND THE SURVIVORS ARE ABOUT TO VOTE OPRAH OFF THE ISLAND. I'M BUSY!"



it say to unbelievers when we Christians fail so miserably to live up to our own standards?

The taming of the tongue is one issue (among many) where this editor is preaching to himself as well as to the readers of this column. We should all understand there are very few actions capable of doing greater violence to our witness than rumor-mongering and gossip.

It is a failure for which I intend to ask the Lord's forgiveness, and also for his empowerment in combating this pernicious sin. Join me in an earnest prayer that God will deliver each of us from the restless evil contained in our tongues, so that no one else will go to hell because our witness was compromised by our inability to control our words.

A lost world is watching. What is your answer?

GUEST OPINION:

Playing favorites on church/state issues

By Kelly Boggs, pastor
Valley Church, McMinnville, Ore.



McMINNVILLE, Ore. (BP) —The Dalai Lama, spiritual and political leader of the Tibetan people, recently visited Portland, Ore. Aspects of the religious leader's tour were not only promoted by area school districts, but young people who attended a youth summit where the Dalai Lama spoke on world peace were shuttled to and from the event on school buses at taxpayer expense.

Given the application of the First Amendment in recent years, this would seem to be a clear violation of the "separation of church and state."

Supporters of the youth summit defended the use of public school buses. The assertion was made that the Dalai Lama would not be speaking on a religious theme; therefore it could not be considered a religious function.

The only problem with the assertion is that the Dalai Lama does not have to speak on a spiritual topic to be considered religious.

In fact, he does not have to speak at all. As the central figure of Tibetan Buddhism, the Dalai Lama is religion!

Dalai Lama is not a name and it is not really a title; it is more of a description. The term means "Ocean of Wisdom." The Dalai Lama is also known as "His Holiness" to Tibetans. In his homeland he is referred to as Yeshe Norbu, the "Wish-fulfilling Gem" or simply Kundun, meaning "The Presence."

The Dalai Lamas are the manifestations of a particular Buddha who chose to take rebirth for the purpose of serving other human beings. The present Dalai Lama is the 14th incarnation of the Buddha of Compassion.

Adherents of Bud-

dhism believe he is a wisdom being who has forgone nirvana (the desired state of nonexistence) in order to help the less fortunate in their effort toward enlightenment.

According to the organization Friends of Tibet, when the 13th Dalai Lama died in 1933, the Tibetan government did not simply appoint a successor, but it had to seek for and discover a child whom the Buddha of Compassion would incarnate. The regent of Tibet went to a sacred lake and observed a vision in its waters. This vision led to the discovery in 1937 of the child who is presently the Dalai Lama.



The Dalai Lama does not simply represent Tibetan Buddhism — he is Tibetan Buddhism. In this sense, he can be compared to Jesus Christ, who was not an adherent of Christianity — he was, and is, Christianity.

The message of the Dalai Lama might be positive and peaceful. It might be encouraging and uplifting.

However, like the Ten Commandments that are banned from display in public schools, his words are inherently religious in nature. Therefore, according to various courts in our land, they should not be promoted by the state.

Those in the Portland area who supported the use of public schools to promote and transport students to experience the Dalai Lama are either ignorant of the depth of his religious reality, or they simply chose to disregard the recent applications of the First Amendment so they could blatantly flaunt a religion they favor.

My hunch is they are probably guilty of both.

Boggs writes a weekly column for Baptist Press.

Throwaway bread wrappers carry Gospel

NDIAGANIAO, Senegal (BP) — The eight-year-old boy waits impatiently, peeking around his mother's skirt, as she buys a loaf of French bread. When he sees the merchant wrap it in newsprint with a large picture of bread on it, a huge smile breaks out.

He grabs the newsprint from his mother and runs through the crowded, open-air market with his mother close behind. Cutting through a vegetable stand and then dodging some stray goats, the two finally arrive at their destination — a crowded table.

The boy pushes his way through the crowd of people and proudly says to the man sitting at the table, "Here's my paper. I am here for my prize." His mother quickly adds that they want prize number four.

Songo Faye looks up the family's name, enters the redeemable newsprint in the record book and hands them the coveted prize — a single Bible story written in their own language, Sereer. There are more than one million Sereer speakers in Senegal and Gambia. The majority have little or no access to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

"The Sereer want to know about God and Jesus," the evangelist says. "The Bread of Life project is making it possible for many to hear."

A picture of a loaf of bread with the words "Bread of Life" adorns the front of the newsprint. The inside print instructs participants to go to their nearest distributor for a prize. The prizes are 14 different Bible stories and Bible verse memory cards in the Sereer language.

Missionaries Phillip and Karen Brown came up with the idea for the bread wrappers after seeing their own trash used as



BREAD OF LIFE — The large logo on this vendor's bread wrapper qualifies the buyer to redeem the wrapper for a prize that is one of 14 different Bible stories and Bible verse memory cards in the Sereer language. As bread vendors travel from village to village, and as Sereer people pass the Bible stories among themselves, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ is reaching hundreds of people otherwise isolated from Christian witness. (Photo by Sue Sprengle)

bread wrappers at the marketplace. The Browns have served as missionaries in West Africa since they were appointed in 1997 by the International Mission Board, a Southern Baptist Convention agency supported by gifts through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. "They use anything they can find to wrap up the bread," Brown says. "I watched one guy sit down and read his bread wrapper. I asked him why he was reading a piece of trash. He answered that it had words on it — so it must be read."

The Bread of Life project is a natural fit for the Sereer, especially since custom requires a person traveling to town or market to bring something home that is not available in the villages — bread.

One million wrappers were printed and distributed to bread

vendors, free of charge. Sereer evangelists and pastors man the distribution booths at each market to give out the Bible stories and witness to any who will listen. There also are distribution points in different villages.

Brown says the wrappers are currently being used in 10 markets, but because each vendor attends a different market every day of the week, almost all 160 Sereer markets are receiving the wrappers.

"This just amazes me how so many people from all over Sereer land are being reached by this," he says. "The first year Karen and I were here, we spent all our time driving to get to villages and didn't make it to half of them. With this ministry, we have reached almost every village and have seen more people than we ever thought possible."

Original plans called for printing Bible stories on the bread wrappers. But the Browns opted to use a redeemable prize system because of the Sereer's respect for Scripture.

"A Muslim wouldn't put the Koran on a bread wrapper; it

would be degrading to God," Brown says. "We wanted this to reach everyone, so [we] invented a points and trading system."

After getting a bread wrapper, a Sereer turns it in for one of 14 Bible stories. The evangelists keep records on what Bible stories each person has read. The records allow them to know which villages are receiving the wrappers and returning for more. Each story also has a study sheet for each participant to fill out. When that is returned, more points are earned.

Once all 14 lessons are done, the participant has earned 50 points and the privilege of the "Jesus" film coming to his village. The evangelists make the film showing a huge celebration and bring other Christians to the village to worship.

"We don't really know how many people are responding because we aren't keeping track of numbers," Faye says. "I would say hundreds and hundreds and hundreds."

"That one Bible story paper passes through 40 or 50 hands in each village several times before the next story makes it to them," he says.

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Kazakhs face harassment

LONDON (BP) — Two young men who lead a small Baptist church in Kulsary, Kazakhstan, have protested against an illegal order by the district prosecutor banning the church, Keston News Service reported May 16. Prosecutor Khagibula Kasymov ordered the Iman (Love) Church to stop all meetings, claiming that it could not function until it had state registration, despite the fact that Kazakh law does not ban activity by religious communities without registration — a frequent claim by officials across the former Soviet republic. The Iman Church is the second unregistered Christian house church to be closed down in Kulsary since the beginning of the year. An April 16 report from the Council of Churches of Evangelical Christians/Baptists — which rejects registration on principle in all of the former Soviet republics where it operates — complained against the growing trend to pressure its congregations to register or close. It cited a warning issued by Judge A. Aenov and prosecutor R. Jumagulova on April 2 to pastor U. Rudenko in the city of Taldykorgan, 165 miles northeast of the former capital Almaty, that he was violating the administrative code by leading an unregistered religious group. The report also cited pressure on a Baptist church in Kyzylorda in central-southern Kazakhstan. On April 10, Judge S. Jappashaev of Kyzylorda city court levied a fine of 7,750 tenge (\$53 U.S.) on Valeri Pak for violating Article 375 part 1 of the administrative code. The court "suspended" the church's activity "until the elimination of the violation" — until it obtains registration — giving the church six months to obtain it.

Looking back

10 years ago

Members of Providence Church in Marietta, Ga., bring their Mississippi work to a close with the organization of an African-American Southern Baptist Church in Meridian. The church was organized on Sunday, May 5, after revival services were held on Saturday and Sunday.

20 years ago

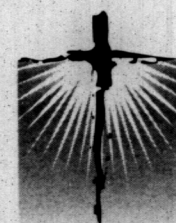
By a 6-3 margin, the U. S. Supreme Court upholds an Indiana law stating that individual states may restrict all abortions performed during the second trimester of pregnancy. The Indiana law was passed shortly after the court's 1973 ruling that states may not forbid abortions outright.

50 years ago

The newest Southern Baptist seminary, Southeastern Seminary on the campus of Wake Forest College in North Carolina, will open in September. Seminary president Sydnor L. Stealey makes the announcement at a board of trustees meeting at the Edgewater Gulf Hotel in Edgewater.

MISSISSIPPI
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FRONT PAGE



Christian role in science told at conference

SEATTLE (BP) — Today's scientific advances owe their genesis to Christianity, and every new discovery of the cosmos is an affirmation of God at work in the universe he created, noted scientists and educators said in addressing a "Cosmos and Creator" conference at the Discovery Institute public policy think tank in Seattle.

"Christianity was the midwife bringing modern science to birth in the mid-1700s," declared Sir John Polkinghorne, an Anglican priest and physicist from Cambridge University in England.

As such, both science and Christianity have things to offer each other; far from being at war with one another, science and Christianity should be good friends, Polkinghorne said at the two-day conference sponsored by the Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture and attended by about 700 participants in late April.

"There is a cumulative case for God the creator," the scientist-theologian said. "Centuries of scientific discovery has done much to corroborate religion."

Polkinghorne's view was supported by nuclear physicist Peter E. Hodgson of Oxford



GOD AND SCIENCE — This striking composite of Michelangelo's "Creation ex nihilo" and a modern DNA image is the official logo for the Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture at Discovery Institute in Seattle.

University and five other conference speakers who are noted experts in varied scientific fields revolving around cosmology, the study of the universe and its origins.

Cosmology is a hot topic in scientific circles today. It's a special section in the June 2001 issue of *Astronomy* magazine, and it was the cover article in the January 2001 issue of *Scientific American*, with a shorter article also in the March 2001 issue.

"It is such a hot topic partially because it is so speculative and theoretical, but mostly because the origin of the universe is the point where most people expect

to find God, whether they like it or not," said Discovery Institute spokesman Mark Edwards after the conference.

The Cosmos and Creator speakers explained that evidence for intelligent design of the universe is increasing (compared to the "random chance" of evolution) as is the awareness that former explanations for the origins of the universe (such as evolution) are incomplete and inadequate.

Four developments converged for the birth of modern science, Hodgson explained: systems of writing, mathematics, communication,

and a well-developed social structure so various responsibilities could be divided among the people, leaving some to spend their lives studying, thinking, and writing about what they learn.

Hodgson suggested the reason modern science developed as it did in the 17th century was because of the cultural acceptance of Christian beliefs about the world.

Guillermo Gonzalez, an astronomer at the University of Washington, and Jay Richards, program director for the Discovery Institute's Center for the Renewal of Science and Culture, wrapped up the Cosmos

and Creator conference with their joint addresses on the correlation between the measurability and habitability of the universe.

"The most habitable bodies appear to allow for the highest degree of measurability of their environments," Gonzalez said.

"The same processes and physical conditions that optimize habitability on a planetary body also optimize measurability."

The implication, Richards explained, was that the cosmos is fine-tuned not only for the existence of intelligent life, but for scientific discovery as well.

Missionary interview to air May 24

NEW YORK (BP) — Baptist missionary Jim Bowers, who survived a Peruvian military jet's April 20 shootdown that killed his wife and infant daughter, will tell his story on ABC's "PrimeTime Live" to be aired May 24 at 9 p.m. CDT.

Also on the telecast, pilot Kevin Donaldson will describe in detail what happened when bullets tore into the small plane carrying missionaries with the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism.

ABC religion correspondent Peggy Wehmeyer also will take a look at what motivates missionaries who continue their work in the name of God in the face of danger.

Bowers tells ABC's Diane Sawyer that his faith in God has helped sustain him and his family while they struggle to understand the tragedy.

Seniors endorse retreat at Gulfshore Assembly

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

For the 337 adults from 29 different churches attending the first of three senior adult retreats at Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian, being a senior was never so enlightening or fun.

The Discipleship and Family Ministry (DFM) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board sponsored this first retreat at Gulfshore May 14-16. "This was our twenty-fourth year," said

Glenn Shows, consultant in the DFM department. "It just gets better every year."

Several attendees agreed. LaNita Webb, a member of Forest Church, Forest, said, "This is such a beautiful part of God's world down here. The conferences are so good and the fellowship is such a blessing."

Her pastor, Gordon Sansing, said, "I've never been to a bad one. We love Gulfshore."

"One strength of this retreat is the variety of conferences we offer," said Shows. "I think that's part of what keeps people coming back."

Conferences ran the gamut from practical to pure fun. From more serious conferences such as "Mid-Life Retirement" and "My Identity in Christ" to lighthearted conferences such as "Happy Side of Life" and "Saturday Serials Remembered," topics appealed to a broad range of interests.

Not surprisingly, Mickey Bound's "Happy Side" and Farrell Blankenship's "Saturday Serials Remembered" drew appreciative, boisterous crowds. "Mickey loves to laugh," said Annie Brewer of Oakland Heights Church in Meridian. "We sure enjoyed him."

There were also plenty of comments about the food at Gulfshore.

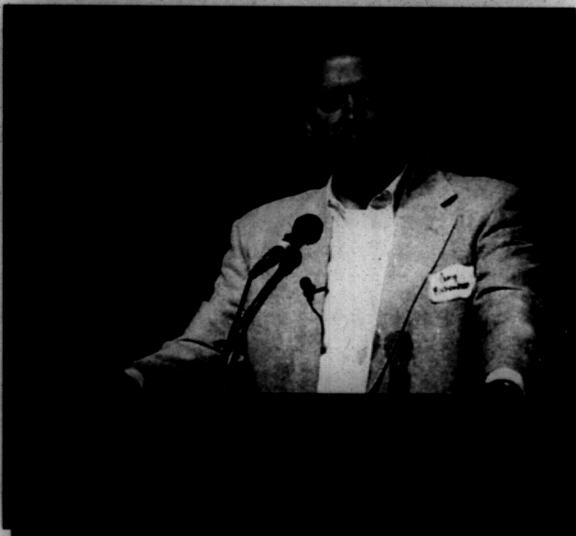
"I feel like I've been eating around the clock," said one man while waiting in line to be served lunch. "You sure can't complain about how much we're getting." In addition to providing ample meals and breaks, Gulfshore's food service shone at the seafood banquet on Tuesday evening.

Retired pastor James Richardson of Madison and his twin sons, Jay Richardson, pastor of First Church, Greenville, and Gary Richardson, pastor of North Oxford Church, Oxford,

preached in the worship services. A third son, Ian Richardson, led the music. Several seniors commented on how special it was to see a family in ministry serving together.

Other seniors were simply thankful to be at Gulfshore.

"I just love being on the water," said Sara Huff of Forest Church. "This is my second time here for the retreat. This year I just came to receive. I sure



A FAMILY AFFAIR - Jay Richardson, pastor of First Church, Greenville, was one of four Richardson family members who led in worship at the first of three state Senior Adult Retreats at Gulfshore. (Photo by Tony Martin)

hope to come back next year."

"In years past, it seemed that half the attendees were first time guests," said Shows. "Now, we're getting more and more returnees. That's a healthy sign. I believe that there are a variety of needs being met."

"Our senior adults are so appreciative. The conference leaders feel like it's an honor for them to be invited. I like for them to enjoy themselves, too," Shows noted.



PLAYING FOR LAUGHS — Mickey Bounds of Farmerville, La., shares one of scores of hilarious stories during his conference at Senior Adult Week at Gulfshore Assembly. (Photo by Tony Martin)

Over a hundred years ago the Tennessee militia was known as the Volunteers, ready at a moment's notice to pick up their muskets and march off for whatever battle they volunteered, for a cause they felt was important, and for a cause that was larger than they were.

When it comes to today's volunteers for the work of God, I suppose Mississippi Baptists could be labeled the Mississippi Volunteers. Mississippi Baptists not only give their money in order to send missionaries around the world to tell about Jesus, but they also respond as volunteers. While we may not know of all of the volunteer projects that took place, of the ones we were able to calculate, it is amazing to see what Mississippi Baptists are doing.

Just this past year, folks from our churches went to 41 states on mission projects and 40 countries of the world. These volunteers make a difference. They are young and old, men and women, from rural and city settings. They travel sometimes near and sometimes far in the name of Jesus. Since the peak of volunteer mission efforts come in the summer, let me share with you some guidelines as you or your church prepare for a volunteer mission effort:

• **Help — don't hurt.** Remember as you go that you are there to serve, not just to be served. You are there to help with what a church, mission, or group of people need that will help and benefit them — not hurt them. Sometimes we go on mission projects and rather than do what they think needs to be done, we want to do what we think needs to be done. Keep in mind that the folks with whom you work were there

before you arrived and will be there after you leave, and you need to enter in to where they are rather than force them to get where you are.

• **Leave — more than you receive.** What I mean by this is that as you go and work with a church, or mission group, do not deplete them of all their resources. You will receive a blessing and it will probably be to the point that your cup overflows; but, in a practical sense, be aware that when a group of folks go to help, they can overload the resources of the folks with whom they are helping. It may seem like small things and yet they can become very large when a group begins to use the mission resources like soap, paper, gas, water, and electricity. These can be pushed up out of budget. Just remember, as you go, try to leave more than you receive.

• **Pray — don't stay.** Many of our mission endeavors need short-term work and long-term prayer. While you feel a sense of spiritual enrichment because you are using some of your vacation time to do a mission project, if you are not careful you can overstay your welcome and your well-meaning sacrifice can be a little more than the mission or missionaries can stand. Note this — while you may not stay, continue to pray! The power of intercessory, knowledgeable, spiritual, and continuing prayer goes on undergirding whatever it is that you did.

• **Care — don't despair.** One final thought about volunteer work relates to being flexible. When you get to a place to do what you think you are supposed to do, it is very probable things won't go like you had planned. This will not be because you didn't plan well, but because things can change. Things change not only on your part, but they can change dramatically with the people and in the cultural setting where you are going.

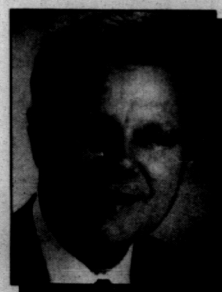
One of our mission teams that went overseas thought they were going to be building a church building. They got there and things were not ready for them to build a building. There were no blocks to lay, and no wood to nail. The building was far from being ready to construct. So, what do you do for the days that you are there? Well, the only constructive work available was digging a ditch. Now, some of these folks were gifted, skilled, capable builders, but they jumped right in there and spent most of their time digging a ditch.

Still, that is not what they went there to do. They thought they went to build, and instead, ended up digging a ditch! Yet, what they really went there to do was accomplished! They were there to build relationships! Out of that experience multiple things began to transpire, for both the people who went and the people who were there, that made long-term differences.

Wherever you go and whatever it is that you plan to do, make your ultimate goal to be caring for people in Jesus' name. If you do that, whatever you actually do will be a by-product, and a good by-product, of what you went there to accomplish. The Lord will be honored, the people will be blessed, and you will have accomplished a great work for the Lord!

Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board



CP Stretch meetings highlight program's benefits

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Southern Baptists believe the Cooperative Program (CP) is the best financial expression of the Great Commission any denomi-

nation has ever discovered. David Michel, associate executive director of the Missions Extension Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), has spent the last two months traveling the state

hosting nine Cooperative Program Stretch meetings. He's quite a field marshal.

"We want to employ state convention board members to put a personal face on CP," said Michel.

The Stretch meetings were held in nine specific geographic sections of the state and were attended by the various associational missions directors and board members in each area.

After lunch, Michel and Jerry Mixon, director of the MBCB Stewardship Department, shared CP promotional ideas with the attendees.

Board members were encouraged to contact seven strategic churches in their counties and encourage them to stretch their mission support through CP.

Churches were provided customized spreadsheets highlighting their participation in CP giving. They were also encouraged to conduct a CP celebration emphasis one Sunday this year.

The Cooperative Program Stretch focuses on the church budget planning process. During the local church budgeting period, associational and CP funding decisions are made.

Churches are encouraged to include mission support as the first line item in their annual budget.

"The Cooperative Program is an avenue through which we can reach the entire world," said Michel. "Churches face the temptation to get so locked in on their local needs that they

neglect missions. This is simply a great way for a congregation to have an impact way beyond themselves."

For additional information on CP promotion, contact the Missions Extension Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3231 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 231. E-mail: dmichel@mbcb.org.

CP fast facts:

• CP undergirds the work of 5,025 international missionaries in 154 countries through the International Mission Board (IMB).

• 1,700 new churches were started last year through the efforts of 5,000 missionaries supported by the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

• 782,700 people were baptized worldwide through CP missions.

• More than 15,000 future missionaries, pastors, and church leaders were equipped through the work of six seminaries.

• CP supports the missions and evangelistic efforts of the MBCB.



Found Faithful
A Backward Glance — A Forward Look

Calvary Baptist Church of Jackson, Mississippi,
invites you to share in the joy of the
celebration of our

ONE-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY
June 2-3, 2001

Friday, June 1 — Chapel Choir reunion

Saturday, June 2

3:00 p.m. Church Opens for Visiting, Viewing
Displays, Videos

4:45 p.m. Hamburger Supper — Serving until 6 p.m.

6:30 p.m. Celebration Service

Sunday, June 3

8:30 a.m. Church Opens for Visiting, Viewing
Displays, Videos

10:30 a.m. Celebration Service, Lunch After Service

**Please call 354-1300 for more information &
to make meal reservations.**



MAKING MISSIONS A PRIORITY — Jerry Mixon, director of the Stewardship Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, addresses a group of associational missions directors at the Stretch meeting in Gulfport on May 14. (Photo by Tony Martin)

NAMB trustees share Christ in Las Vegas

Revival manual by Sheffield now available

A practical revival preparation manual by Forrest Sheffield, senior pastor of Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, is now available. The Revival Preparation Manual, which consists of 164 pages in a three-ring vinyl binder, contains countdown calendars for 14 committees used in revival preparation and other materials to assist revival planners in achieving their goals.

"The Revival Preparation Manual is a 'back to basics' approach on winning lost people to Christ and fanning the flames of revival among the people of God," Sheffield said.

For more information, Sheffield can be contacted at (662) 842-6917. The Internet web site for the manual is www.revival-prep.org.

LAS VEGAS (BP) — In the midst of one of the largest "swap meets" in the western United States, Jim Guenther had an opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with a Hispanic man and his family May 5.

"I didn't really have time to bring them to a point of really making a commitment then, but the end result was that they came the next morning to [a nearby Hispanic church] and made a public profession of faith in the service," said Guenther, pastor of Trinity Church in suburban Albany, N.Y.

It was the sort of experience that excites Southern Baptist volunteers on a regular basis throughout the country but for Guenther, who serves as a trustee of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), it also was an opportunity to play a meaningful role in one of the board's most important strategic initiatives.

Loving Las Vegas, the local presence of the agency's Strategic Focus Cities outreach effort, operates the booth each weekend in an effort to distribute free copies of the "Jesus" video and help people discover a personal relationship with Christ.

Guenther was one of about two dozen trustees and their wives who participated in a three-day mission trip focused on the Loving Las Vegas effort preceding their regularly scheduled May 8-9 meeting in the city.

In addition to the booth at the swap meet — similar to a flea

market in other parts of the country — other trustees the morning of May 5 participated in evangelistic block parties sponsored by two existing churches. A fourth group walked through neighborhoods praying for households in an area of town where a new church is being started with the help of Strategic Focus Cities resources.

The next day trustees preached in or attended churches throughout the city and prayed over the city from the observation deck of the Stratosphere, the tallest building in Las Vegas. They also were given a guided tour May 7 of several churches and mission points where they heard of the work being done by Southern Baptists in the past and present.

"It is one thing to talk about missions, fund missions and even send missionaries ... it is another thing to do missions," said Robert E. Reccord, NAMB's president.

"NAMB was delighted to offer the opportunity to involve our trustees and their spouses in missions in one of our strategic focus cities — Las Vegas. The response was predictable — a heightened excitement about living an on-mission lifestyle, churches that were greatly encouraged and people that were saved!"

He noted trustees have requested that similar Strategic Focus Cities missions experiences be a regular part of the May board meeting each year.

At the block parties, trustees focused on manning games for children, staffing food lines and otherwise serving in support roles — freeing up volunteers from local churches to share Christ with those attending.



WITNESS IN VEGAS — Ed Rhodes (right), a member of Charleston Church, Charleston, S.C., shares his faith with a local resident during a May 5 block party at First Church, Boulder City, Nev. (Photo by James Dotson)

"We came here to do the service so the church can do the ministry," said David Fannin, pastor of Nassau Bay Church in Houston. As chairman of the NAMB subcommittee responsible for overseeing Strategic Focus Cities he also was glad other trustees were able to participate personally.

"I think it's good for them to see how critical and crucial their task is," he said. "Our task is to reach the U.S. and Canada for Christ, and if we ignore the cities we'll never do it."

Will Fields, a lay member of Crusade Church in Conyngham, Pa., said he appreciated the opportunity to connect personally with the ministry efforts trustees deal with regularly from an administrative standpoint.

"As long as we're going to have a Strategic Focus Cities initiative like this we need to be involved in it. We need to be on mission," he said.

Fields added that it also gave trustees an opportunity to work shoulder-to-shoulder in ministry and get to know each other better — something he

believes will help them work together more effectively as a body.

"I have much more of an appreciation for the board members here," added Pat Northrop, a trustee from First Church, Opp, Ala. "They came with a passion to share the Lord, and I've seen them take advantage of every opportunity."



NATCHEZ CHILDREN'S HOME

POSITION AVAILABLE: HOUSEPARENTS

Christian married couple needed to care for abused and neglected children in group home.

Minimal requirements: high school diploma, teachable, flexible spirit, energetic.

Salary and benefit package. Please contact Nancy Hungerford for more information:

601-442-6858 or
fax 601-442-7722



TRUSTEES TALK — North American Mission Board trustees (left to right) David Fannin, Danny Souder, and Joe Strahan chat at the registration booth during a May 5 block party at First Church of Boulder City, Nev. Strahan, of Vicksburg, was sharing how he had just led a young man to faith in Christ. (Photo by James Dotson)

We have the Perfect Location for your Group Event!

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include lodging, dining, musical shows, Dollywood and other major attractions with the beautiful Smokies as your backdrop. One call to us can save you time and money. We take care of all the details for you. **CALL SOON** for best availability!

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Calvary Baptist Church in New Orleans, La., invites you to a wonderful day of wisdom and worship!

Keith Manuel, pastor

A free barbecue lunch will be served and a nursery will be provided for children ages 4 and under.

JUNE 10

AT

8:30 A.M.

For more information call (504) 367-6464
or visit our website at www.cbc7chs.org

SPEAKERS ARE:

Dr. Jerry Rankin, *president*
International Mission Board
We Can Win Our World Through Christ!

Dr. Chuck Kelly, *president*
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
We Can Win Our City Through Christ!

Dr. Richard Land, *president*
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
We Can Win Our Nation Through Christ!

Mississippi Baptist Foundation



The Mississippi Baptist Foundation has served Christ and Mississippi Baptists since 1943 by providing many avenues for Christians to give to the Lord's work in Mississippi and around the world.

2001 Board of Trustees

Ron Logan, president
Ridgecrest Baptist Church
Madison

Barry Hardy, vice president
Broadmoor Baptist Church
Madison

Joe Gary, treasurer
First Baptist Church
Tupelo

Paul Breazeale, secretary
First Baptist Church
Jackson

Jim Ford
First Baptist Church
Columbus

Ed Jones
First Baptist Church
Pascagoula

Bob Maddux
First Baptist Church
Coldwater

Jerry Stovall
First Baptist Church
Jackson

Kearney Travis
First Baptist Church
Hattiesburg

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION

OUR MINISTRY

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation serves as the trust agency of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, offering a means whereby Mississippi Baptists can provide perpetual support for Mississippi Baptist and Southern Baptist causes until our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ returns.

As the trust agency of the convention, the Baptist Foundation promotes Christian estate stewardship, receives, invests, and manages endowment gifts, and distributes earnings, as specified by donors, to Baptist ministries. The Baptist Foundation serves as a money manager for Baptist churches, institutions, and agencies. The Baptist Foundation is directed by a Board of Trustees elected by the Mississippi Baptist Convention and is funded by a Cooperative Program allocation. As a denominational agency, the Baptist Foundation is committed to winning Mississippi and the World to Jesus Christ.

GOALS

- To maximize the resources God gives to provide perpetual support for Baptist ministries through good stewardship of assets entrusted to the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.
- To be a resource for Mississippi Baptists for estate stewardship information and assistance.
- To encourage every adult Mississippi Baptist to have a Last Will and Testament and to include Baptist causes for at least a tithe of their estate.
- To be a provider of money management services for Mississippi Baptist churches, institutions, and agencies.
- To provide excellent customer service and to constantly improve donor relations.

E. Harold Fisher, Jr., executive director
Jane Newell, associate director
Pat Hutton, administrative assistant
Jerry Thornhill, accountant

Baptist Foundation Assists Kokomo Baptist Church

by Jane Newell
MBF associate director

Kokomo Baptist Church is involved in an effort to build all new facilities to replace the community school building built in the early part of this last century that served as the church building. The cost of heating and cooling the large antiquated building combined with several other factors proved to be impractical. Thus, the challenge of building a new facility soon became a reality.

Jane Newell, MBF associate director, said, "It's amazing to see how the members and the leadership of Kokomo Baptist Church are using their time, talents, support, and encouragement to construct an incredible place to worship. The stained glass windows are awe-inspiring, the spacious facilities and design are ideal. It is my prayer that this church body will continue to meet the various needs in this community."

Glenn Nace, pastor of Kokomo Baptist Church, said, "With an annual budget of less than \$60,000, the building is being built through vol-

unteer work and fund raisers." Nace was encouraged by Herrin, associational missions director for Lawrence, Marion, and Walthall counties, to contact the Foundation for assistance. Herrin stated, "I would encourage each association to educate the church leadership of the services offered by the Mississippi Baptist Foundation."

Recently Newell spoke to the pastors in the Walthall Association. In her review of the services provided by the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, she stated that the Rev. A.E. Lucas Memorial Trust Fund was available to assist needy small churches. This fund was established in 1974 with a \$4,000 gift given by Mrs. Clara Platt in memory of her father, who for many years had served as a bivocational pastor. Her husband, Dr. S.B. Platt, a son and daughter-in-law, Sammy and Jo Ann, survived Clara Platt, who died in 1999. Mrs. Platt regularly contributed to this fund over and above her tithe. Since the fund was established over \$70,000 has been used for needy small churches.

The foundation promotes estate stewardship by offering three general seminars designed to fit into the time allotted during discipleship training

or perhaps a group luncheon. To schedule one or all of the free seminars for your church, contact the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.



Pictured above are Archie Herrin, Tri-County associational missions director; Jane Newell, associate director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation; and Glenn Nace, pastor, Kokomo Baptist Church. The trustees of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation unanimously voted to assist Kokomo Baptist Church with a \$1,000 gift. Newell presented the check to Archie Herrin and Nace.

Amount of Seminary Scholarships for Spring 2001 Semester: \$52,019.60

SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

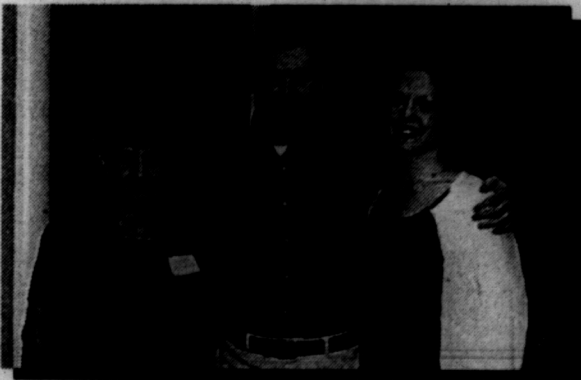
Luvie Thomas
Emmanuel Baptist Church,
Jackson
First Baptist Church,
Natchez
John Davis Memorial
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary
General Fund
Mrs. Capitola Dean
Kate B. Brashier
Irene Laird
Dan C. Hall
Carl Olander
Adams Union Association
Carl & Dollie Olander
Louise Hart
Mr. & Mrs. Will Berry &
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Norvell Robertson
Roland & Lillian Leavell
R.B. Thomas
McLaurin Heights Baptist
Church, Pearl
H.G. Carpenter
Don R. Baker
Buford R. & Frances B.
Frazier
E.C. Fortenberry
Mr. & Mrs. John Rundle
Thurman Earl Prevost
Memorial
John Flowers
A.B. Cantwell
Mississippi Baptist
Seminary
Grady & Fannie Cox
Leola M. Withers
Eunice Hutchins
Gertrude H. Dana
Cleveland Annuity
Joseph & Katherine Oliver
J.E. Barnes, Sr. Memorial
Jewell A. Grafton
Joe Hutcheson
Annie Kier
E.F. Turner
Esther Magness
Gertrude Johnson
William Taylor

Alma Pittman
William P. Harper
Minnie D. Parkman
Otley Pippen
Hugh Lee Simmons
Amanda Kelly
Celia Fae & Zuma Young

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Stephen O. Orr
John Richardson
Peter Swann
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Tiedemann

**MIDWESTERN BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY**
Charles Ray

**NEW ORLEANS
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY**
Frank Hoyt Ainsworth
Michael Albritton
Trent Bell
Paula Binns
Michael Bird
Nathaniel K. Blackledge
Mark A. Bowman



Left, Pat Hutton, administrative assistant, Mississippi Baptist Foundation, with scholarship recipients at a reception held in their honor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Jeffery W. Box
Deena Boyd
Emily Bradford
Donald Breshler, Jr.
Reginald L. Bridges
Rebecca Brock
Anthony Brett Campbell
Nova Nathan Carroll
Melissa Jean Casteel
Rebecca Caston
Hal Jackson Clark
Keven Clifton, Jr.
Joseph H. Cole
Kevin Crozier
Jason Mounce Davis
Shannon Allen Davis
Trenidy Davis
Gregory L. Divinity, Sr.
David Francis Dowdy
Amanda M. Dowdy
Sarah Elizabeth Duncan
David Kenneth England
Talmadge Shane
Freeman
Leslie Gaines
Juston Gates
Michael Giles
Ellen Womack Giles
T. Brett Golson
Chanda L. Stevens Gray
Chad Gary Grayson
Jonathan Wade Haines
Connie Lynn Harris
Ed Herron

Nicholas W. Hodges
Jamie D. Holden
Raymond W. Holder
Joel D. Hudson
David E. Jacks
Justin Temple Knight
James W. (Buddy) Knott
Derek S. Lambert
Matthew E. Loving
Michael Durell Makamson
Daniel Robert Malone
Brian M. McDonald
Don M. McKee
Joanna Joyce Miley
Milton Wayne Moak
Robert Moore
Michael Morgan
Scott Norris
Alisha Olive
David Lee Patterson
Ather Ray Quinnelly
Jonathan Craig
Richardson
Kelly Anderson Rinehart
Dale Round
Clark Rumpfelt
Sammy Sabine
Charles Christopher
Savell
Jane Elizabeth Schenck
Jonathan Eric Sharp
Ben Persons Skipper
Phillip Slusher
Christie Smith
Derrick Wayne Smith
Barry Grant Stegall
Dwight D. Stewart
Timothy Stone
Jerry G. Stroot
Christian Stubbs
Donald R. Taylor
Alison Amanda Trammell
Paul M. Trosper
Dana E. Vick
Kaylee G. Wade
Jason Wade
Tim Walker
Stephen Walker
Revis Leon Wallace
C. Raneldo Weaver, II
David H. White

Phillip Wiley
John D. Williams Jr.
Arthur Joseph Williams Jr.
Paul W. Young

SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Ben Allen Albritton
Micah Daniel Carter
Robert N. Chambers, Jr.
Derek Hudson
Bryan Timothy Myers
Richard Scott Savell

SOUTHEASTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

William E. McMullan
James L. Merck, Jr.
Gregory Lee Spencer
Laura Ruth Thompson
Christopher James West

SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Heather Anne Booth
Rev. Charles T. Brister
David T. Brown
Justin Busby
Michael Eric Byrd
David T. Carley
Cory M. Cartwright
Wendy Brown Celoria
Jonathan M. Celoria
Mark Alan Celoria
John L. Chappellear



Teresa Clark
Kimberly Michelle Cook
Ryan Culpepper
Christopher Brantley Dale
Billie Lester Dantzler
Robin Dean
Lynda Nicole Duckworth
Jason W. Duran
Jeremy Emert
Matthew Ervin
James Russell Fair
John Fairly
John H. Flynt, III
Mark E. Gibson
Robert Daniel Glenn



Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary scholarship students enjoy the MBF reception held in their honor.

Tom Grubbs
Jill R. Harrington
John M. Holland, Jr.
Jonathan David Howes
Alyssa Zaneta Hurst
Byron L. James
Jeremy Lee
Elisabeth C. Lee
Paul Timothy Lee

Michelle Mathews
Stephen May
Jeremy McMahan
Katherine Leigh McNeece
Rachel Pritchett Merchant
Michelle Ivy Mullins
Andrew L. Mullins
Kevin Partridge
Herman E. Perrett, Jr.
Justin Peters
Pirom J. Pruski
Andrew K. Puckett
James Donald Reeves
Lucas M. Riley

Left to right, Dorothy Totten, Student Financial Aid Services, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), Jane Newell, Mississippi Baptist Foundation (MBF), David McQuitty, Student Financial Aid Services, SWBTS and Pat Hutton, MBF, visiting at the Southwestern reception.

Estate Planning Tools for Giving

Outright Gift

You can make a gift to the Mississippi Baptist Foundation and designate it for any or all Baptist causes, from your local church, to World Hunger fund at the International Mission Board. With your gift to the Baptist Foundation you will know your gift will be used as you directed until Christ comes again.

Outright Gift of Appreciated Property

Appreciated property such as stocks and mutual funds make good giving vehicles. By making a gift of appreciated assets your tax deduction is based on the fair market value of the asset and not your cost. Thus you do not incur the capital gains tax which would be due had you sold the asset and then made a gift.

Gift Through Will

Through your Will you can specify an amount or a percentage of your estate to be given to the Mississippi Baptist Foundation and used to provide financial resources to the Baptist cause or causes you desire.

Charitable Remainder Trust

The Charitable Remainder Trust allows you to make a gift today while you continue to receive the income from the gift for your lifetime with the remainder to a Baptist cause at your death. The Charitable Remainder Trust is flexible allowing the income to be paid to you and your spouse or you, your spouse, and your children.

Charitable Lead Trust

The Charitable Lead Trust allows you to establish a trust with the income paid to the Baptist cause you specify with the remainder paid back to you or to members of your family after a period of years.

Charitable Gift Annuity

The Charitable Gift Annuity allows you to make a gift today and get the income back for your lifetime. At your death the remainder is paid to the Baptist cause you specify.

Pooled Income Fund

The Pooled Income Fund pays income back to the donor with the remainder to a Baptist cause. This is a great giving vehicle for smaller gifts.

Donor Advised Funds

The Donor Advised Fund is an alternative to establishing a private family foundation. The Donor Advised Fund allows a family who desires to financially support one or many Baptist causes to make a gift and maintain a certain amount of influence on investments and beneficiary distributions.

Life Insurance

You can make the Mississippi Baptist Foundation the owner and beneficiary of a life insurance policy you do not need any more or purchase a new policy naming the Baptist Foundation as owner and beneficiary. This is a great way to make a gift to further the cause of Christ.

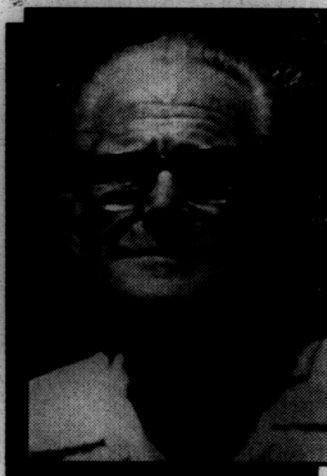
Remainder Interest in Real Property

You can make a gift of your house or farm while retaining the right to live in the house until your death. You have the assurance that your house or farm will be used at your death for the Baptist cause you directed.

These giving tools may sound complicated to you but they are easy for us. The Foundation recognizes each individual's particular needs, and goals. We strive to provide our services in a personal and professional manner. We will be glad to visit with you, your family, and your financial advisors to discuss the pros and cons of each gift type to find the one that best fits you.

MBF to Administer Oakhurst Baptist Church, Clarksdale, Yarber Scholarship

On July 14, 2000, Oakhurst Baptist Church, Clarksdale, Miss. entrusted the Yarber Scholarship to be administered by the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. The income earned is to be used to provide scholarships to individuals attending any of the Southern Baptist Convention supported colleges or seminaries.



L.E. (Esco) Yarber

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation along with a scholarship committee composed of members of Oakhurst Baptist Church, Clarksdale, will be responsible for selecting the student recipient each year.

Jane visited with Mrs. Yarber in Magee where she had moved to be near her daughter and son-in-law, Gerald and Ruth Elaine Yarber Regel, and her two granddaughters, Jennifer and Janet Regel. Ruth Yarber died February 8, 2001. Ruth Elaine said, "Mother had a deep Christian concern to help worthy young people and wanted to give a gift to remember the Lord's work. She also had a desire to perpetuate the outstanding Christian influence of her husband and my dad, Esco Yarber, and following Dad's death she established a scholarship fund with Oakhurst Baptist Church in his memory."

Jane Newell, associate director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation said, "Mrs. Yarber demonstrated her willingness to provide needed financial assistance and encouragement to ministerial

students. Those receiving financial assistance will be encouraged in their academic pursuits and inspired



Ruth Yarber

to provide future scholarship aid to equally worthy and needy students."

Persons interested in applying for a scholarship need to contact the

Mississippi Baptist Foundation or Oakhurst Baptist Church.

Ruth's investment in the Lord's work was surely rewarding to her during her lifetime, and others will be encouraged and strengthened in the years to come because of her care, generosity, and support.



Seated, Oakhurst Baptist Church Scholarship Committee member Ruby Jones; standing left to right are Jane Newell, associate director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, Mitchell Brandon, Scholarship Committee member, and Sandra Chow, Oakhurst Baptist Church Scholarship Committee chairman.

Other Services of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation

ESTATE STEWARDSHIP

The Foundation promotes estate stewardship by offering three general seminars. Each seminar is designed to fit into the time allotted during discipleship training or perhaps a group luncheon. To schedule one or all of the free seminars for your church, please call the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

Will Seminar -- features a discussion of the Last Will and Testament and its importance, including a discussion of valid wills in Mississippi, the probate process, estate taxes, property ownership, and gifts to the Lord's work.

Investment Seminar -- features a discussion of investments to help individuals understand the concept of risk vs. return, the importance of asset allocation, and the various classes of assets that can be used to meet an individual's investment objective.

Financial Gifts Seminar -- features a discussion of the tax advantages and the methods for making charitable gifts, including outright gifts, appreciated property gifts, insurance gifts, and life income gifts such as the Charitable Remainder Trust, Gift Annuity and the Pooled Income Fund.

*The Mississippi Baptist Foundation
can be contacted in the
following ways.*

Office location

Mississippi Baptist Foundation
Mississippi Baptist Convention Building
515 Mississippi Street
Suite 203
Jackson, MS 39201

E-mail

mbf@misnet.com

Mailing address

Mississippi Baptist Foundation
P.O. Box 530
Jackson, MS 39205

Phone

1-601-292-3210
1-800-748-1651

Fax

1-601-968-0904

INVESTMENTS

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation provides money management services for Mississippi Baptist churches, institutions, and agencies, as well as for its own accounts. The Foundation pools its assets into common pooled funds that operate in much the same way as mutual funds thereby affording quality investment management even for the smallest account. The Baptist Foundation uses professional money managers chosen based on their specific style of investing and their above average historical rates of return. By combining money managers with specific styles of investing the Foundation gains diversification, reduced risk, and hopefully greater overall investment returns. The investment services are more fully described below.

MBF Equity Fund, a growth stock fund, is designed for capital appreciation with little emphasis on income. The Fund is invested in stock offerings of U.S. corporations as well as international corporations by four (4) outside professional money managers. The performance goal of the fund is to outperform the Standard and Poors 500 market index.

MBF Fixed Income Fund, a bond fund, is designed to provide income, with little attention paid to capital appreciation. The Fund is invested in U.S. government securities and corporate bonds by two (2) outside professional money managers. The performance goal of the fund is to outperform the Lehman Brothers Aggregate market index.

MBF Short Term Cash Fund, an enhanced money market fund, is designed to outperform the current yields from six and 12 month certificate of deposits, as well as the 91-day Treasury bill rate. The Short-Term Cash Fund matches a competitive rate of return with full liquidity. The Fund is managed by one outside professional money manager. The performance goal of the fund is to outperform the rates of return on one year certificates of deposit and U.S. Treasury bill.

MBF General Endowment Fund is designed to meet the long term investment objectives of perpetual endowment accounts. The Endowment Fund seeks to provide income while guarding against the effects of inflation. The Endowment Fund is invested in a preset allocation between stocks and bonds, which is

currently 30% in the MBF Equity Fund and 70% in the MBF Fixed Income Fund.

Pooled Income Fund, designed under the guidelines of the Internal Revenue Service, provides income to the individual investor for their lifetime and then to charity at their death. The Pooled Income Fund is available to anyone wishing to provide future financial resources for Baptist causes. The Pooled Income Fund is currently 100% invested in the MBF Fixed Income Fund.

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation — providing services to Mississippi Baptists who are interested in providing financial resources to further the cause of Christ in Mississippi and around the world. Please call on us.

Disclaimer

The purpose of this publication, prepared by the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, is to provide helpful information of a general nature. It is not intended as a source of specific legal or tax advice. Any reference to past investment performance is no indication of future investment results.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST FOUNDATION INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

| | TOTAL RETURN * | | |
|--|---|----------------------------------|--|
| | Inception June 1993 to March 2001 | Year March 2000 March 2001 | Quarter December 2000 March 2001 |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|
| MBF Equity Fund | 13.26% | -24.9% | -14.0% |
| S & P 500 Index | 15.19% | -21.9% | -11.9% |

| | Inception March 1994 to March 2001 | Year March 2000 March 2001 | Quarter December 2000 March 2001 |
|--|--|----------------------------------|--|
|--|--|----------------------------------|--|

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|
| MBF Fixed Income Fund | 7.71% | 13.20% | 3.98% |
| Lehman Brothers Aggregate Index | 7.59% | 12.53% | 3.04% |

* Past performance is no guarantee of future investment returns.

Mississippi Baptist Foundation Accounts**

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Endowments | 42.68% | \$25,443,055.12 |
| Agency Funds | 33.13% | \$19,749,343.73 |
| Life Income Accounts | 9.89% | \$5,892,959.73 |
| Cash Management Accounts | 8.18% | \$4,876,051.57 |
| Endowed Scholarship Accounts | 6.12% | \$3,653,567.29 |
| Total | 100% | \$59,614,977.44 |
| Total Number of Accounts | 1,041 | |

** Data as of 3/31/2001

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Volunteers from Lincoln and Waltham Associations helped a resident in Ruth with home repairs. The men repaired the roof, flooring, and hot water heater. Pictured (from left) are Rickey Wooley, Sr.; Malcolm Walker; Talmadge Smith, missions director for Lincoln Association; Jimmy Rudder; and Tanner Del Cambre.



Wooley, Walker, Smith, Rudder, and Del Cambre

Hopewell Church, Little Rock, will hold dedication services on June 3 for a new sanctuary. Fellowship will be at 10:00 a.m., worship at 10:30 a.m., and a noon meal will be served. The dedication service is at 1:30 p.m. and will include singing/testimony time featuring the Feltons from Lake.

The children's choir (pictured) of Mt. Moriah Church, Bogue Chitto, presented the musical *Kings, Dreams, and Schemes, The Adventures of Daniel*. The May 6 presentation, under the direction of Steve Yates, was a culmination of the first year of the children's choir program organization. Danny Moss is pastor.



Children's choir of Mt. Moriah Church, Bogue Chitto

Gillsburg Church, Amite County, is celebrating the restoration of the old church May 25-27. Services begin at 7 p.m. Fri. and Sat. Sunday services begin at 10:30 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds.

Harmony Church, Crystal Springs, will host The Steeles in concert June 1, at 7 p.m. Admission is free; a love offering will be received. For more information, call (601) 847-4375 or (601) 892-1121.

Pleasant Grove Church, Woodland, presented an engraved silver tray to James and Johnnie Hill upon their retirement from church offices. Johnnie was honored for her 40 years of service as church clerk/secretary and James was honored for his 30 years of service as Sunday School director. Jeff Gilder is pastor.

Clarke Venable Church, Newton County, held groundbreaking ceremonies April 29. The new 20,000

square foot educational building will include a modern kitchen, fellowship hall, Sunday School rooms, and a nursery. Pictured (from left) are members of the building and fund raising committees: Tim Lee; Terry Bullock; Betty Tingle; Micky Vance, fund raising committee chairman; Barbara Russell; Clinton Russell; Virginia Ethridge; Jean Thrash; Debbie Addy; Chris Harris; Nathan Stamper; Stan Buckley, pastor; Alex Craft; and Eddie Smith, building committee chairman.



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REVIVAL DATES

Canaan Church, Ashland: June 3-6; Sunday, Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Larry Dukes, Waterford, speaker; Steel Faith, Ripley, music; Scott Brady, pastor

Shiloh (Carroll): May 27-30; Sunday, 11 a.m. followed by

dinner; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Randy Bridges, Stewart, evangelist; Doug Warren, music.

Interstate (Bolivar): May 27-30; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Harold Danley, Elaine, Ark., evangelist; Brent Garrison, Drew, music; Robert Haney, pastor.

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Bhutan believers suffer increased repression

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — News of a wave of repression against the churches of Bhutan recently reached the West, just as Christians are preparing to pray for the tiny Himalayan nation wedged between China, Tibet, and India.

Bhutanese Christians, a relative handful in the overwhelmingly Buddhist land, are facing some of the strongest persecution they have yet seen, according to Indian Baptists who alerted the Baptist World Alliance in late April.

Believers attending churches in Bhutan in April reportedly were confronted by authorities who recorded their names. Some ran away in fear of being identified and punished. Police also have closed churches, interrogated pastors, and threatened them with imprisonment — demanding that Christians stop evangelistic activities.

Bhutanese Christians fear further actions, and the Indian Baptists asked for urgent prayers. According to reports in early May received directly from Bhutanese believers, Christians are being told to pledge in writing that they will not gather to worship or evangelize or else face the loss of free education for their children, loss of access to free medical care, and other penalties.

“Very harsh persecution has started in Bhutan,” a Bhutanese Christian said. “Christians are asked either to leave their religion or their country. In some places they are beaten very badly. They are not allowed to gather anymore. Freedom of religion has been taken away. Christians now face termination of employment, expulsion from the country, cancellation of trade licenses, and denial of state benefits.”

The persecution reportedly began to grow last year after Bhutan's king made a speech advising his people they would be better off following one religion: Buddhism. Taking their cue from that speech, regional officials intensified repression of Christians — possibly with the encouragement of Buddhist leaders who claim Christianity will bring division in the family and the nation.

These events are unfolding as Southern Baptists and other Christians plan to lift united prayers for the unreached Drukpa people of Bhutan from 6 p.m. Friday, June 1, through 6 p.m. Saturday, June 2, during the annual Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization.



ART IN VAIN — A young artist in Bhutan is lost in thought over a Buddha statue he has just completed. Bhutan's Drukpa people are lost to the love of God and salvation in Jesus Christ. The Drukpa will be the focus of this year's Day of Prayer and Fasting for World Evangelization, June 1-2. (BP photo)



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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

HOMEcomings

Mt. Olive (Carroll): May 27; worship, 10:30 a.m.; covered dish lunch in fellowship hall; Larry Edwards, former pastor, speaker.

Shiloh (Carroll): May 27; service, 11 a.m., followed by dinner at the church; Randy Bridges, Stewart, speaker; Doug Warren, music.

Antioch (Lawrence): May 27; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; lunch and fellowship at noon; Bert Lewis, former pastor, speaker; Dwayne Dunaway, pastor.

Friendship, Brookhaven: May 27; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; noon meal in fellowship hall followed by afternoon service.

New Hope (Lafayette): June 3; Sunday School, 10:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; noon meal followed by singing; Robert Smith, guest speaker; Joe Nunley, pastor.

Bethesda, Terry: June 3; worship, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Lynn Nations, former pastor, speaker; Marty Wilson, pastor.

Interstate (Bolivar): June 3; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Lee Kirk, Meadville, speaker; Brent Garrison, Drew, music; Robert Haney, pastor.

Calvary (Metro): June 2-3; Sat., 6:30 p.m.; Frank Pollard, Jackson, speaker; Sunday, 10:30 a.m.; Jim Futral, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and Jim Street, speakers, followed by lunch; Jim Street, pastor.

Concord Church, Meadville: May 27; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; afternoon singing, 1:15 p.m.; Tony Mullins, speaker.

Canaan Church, Ashland: 161st anniversary; June 3; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Larry Dukes, Waterford, speaker; Steel Faith, Ripley, music; Scott Brady, pastor.

Hebron, Pheba: 150th anniversary; June 3; worship, 11 a.m.; former pastors, speakers; noon meal; afternoon singing, former music directors; Dickie Bryan, pastor.

Arlington, Bogue Chitto: May 27; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch in fellowship hall; afternoon singing, 1:30 p.m.; Kent Campbell, Vicksburg, former pastor, speaker; Mike Moak, Bogue Chitto, music; Bob Lynch, pastor.

Heucks Retreat (Lincoln): May 27; Sunday School, 9:30

a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; covered dish lunch, noon; afternoon service; H.D. (Bud) Swindall, guest speaker; Tim Moak, music; Ken Kirk, pastor.

Union (Walthall): June 3; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.; noon lunch followed by singing at 1:30 p.m.; Wayne McCollough, Jackson, speaker; A. Harvie Jackson, pastor.

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PART-TIME/MUSIC MINISTER in Neshoba County. Send resumes to Beatline Baptist Church, Search Committee, 12345 Road 505, Philadelphia, MS 39350. Daytime (601) 656-3653, leave message.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS



Fisher, King, McGregor, and Coward

Blue Mountain College president Harold Fisher is pictured with the Alumni Day speakers. Pictured (above, from left) are Fisher; Wayne King, chapel speaker; Kermit McGregor, president, Mississippi Baptist Convention; and Bettye Coward, president-elect of Blue Mountain College.

Blue Mountain College (BMC) Student Government Association president Sarah Skillman presented gifts to Harold and Martha Fisher in honor of their contributions to BMC. Harold Fisher is retiring as president of BMC this year. Pictured (below, from left) are Martha Fisher, Harold Fisher, and Skillman.



The Fishers and Skillman

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Ministerial Alumni Association Officers of Blue Mountain College (pictured from left) are Wayne King, past president; Kenny Digby, president; Johnny Burns, president elect; and Jason Marshall, secretary/treasurer.

Emily Newton, a senior at Blue Mountain College, was recently honored at the Southern Literary Festival. Newton's essay entitled *Spiritual Paralysis in Joyce's Dubliners*, was awarded first place in the competition.



Newton

William Carey College named John Wesley Hughes of Pearl, and Jeannie Miller of Pensacola, Fla., as Mr. and Miss William Carey College. Miller, daughter of Jane and Felix Miller of Pensacola, Fla., is a senior elementary education major; and Hughes, son of Janna and Joey Hughes of Pearl, is a senior general studies major.

The Ministerial Association of Blue Mountain College (BMC) presented Harold Fisher, BMC president and Dean William Washburn with Bibles in honor of their retirement.



King, Digby, Burns, and Marshall

Pictured (from left) are Philip Caples, past president of the Ministerial Association; Fisher; Washburn; and Brad Ligon, president of the Ministerial Association.



Caples, Fisher, Washburn, and Ligon

Blue Mountain College (BMC) recently held Honors Convocation. Harold Fisher, president of BMC, presented the James L. Travis CRV Student Award to Philip Caples; the Sibyl Brame Townsend Warren Christian Leadership and Service Award to Sarah Skillman; the Florence Connally Tyler and Mary Lewis Walters Award to Melissa Potter; the Joyce Elaine Campbell Memorial Award to Anita Goolsby; and the Nettie Courtney Paris Award to Jessica Marshall. Pictured (from left) are Caples, Skillman, Potter, Goolsby, Marshall, and Fisher.

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SBC child-care taking registrations

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — Preschool childcare during the June 12-13 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in New Orleans is available on a first-come, first-served advanced registration basis. After May 25, childcare will be available on a space-available basis. Registration forms are available at www.sbc.net, or by calling Lana Horne at (504) 466-5137.

Five childcare sessions, at \$5 each per child, will be available: Tuesday, June 12, from 8-11:45 a.m., 1-4:55 p.m. and 6:30-9:15 p.m.; and Wednesday, June 13, from 8 a.m.-12:10 p.m. and 3-6:30 p.m.

Registration requires a \$10 non-refundable deposit, to be applied toward the final childcare fees, and a medical information form to be filled out by a parent or guardian for each preschooler.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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MVY LGYH OHK WYL-
WHYLK OPZ OLHYA AV
ZLLR AOL SHD VM AOL
SVYK, HUK AV KV PA,
HUK AV ALHJO PU
PZYHLS ZAHABALZ HUK
QBKNTLUAZ.

LGYH ZLCLU; ALU

Clue: G = Z

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Joshua One: Nine.

Woman recalls horror of Islam conversion

Editor's note: This article contains graphic information regarding the atrocities being committed against Christians on the Indonesian island of Kasiui. Reader discretion is strongly advised.

AMBON, Indonesia (BP) — "My scar healed quite fast, but the sad, humiliated feeling stayed. I feel like I'm no longer complete, both as a person and a woman."

That is the testimony of Christina Sagat, a 32-year-old Christian from Kasiui, Indonesia, who was forcibly circumcised by her Muslim neighbors. Unfortunately, as traumatic as her story sounds, hundreds of women have endured similar oppression.

"My niece, Cecilia, who at that time was eight months pregnant, was also circumcised," Sagat said. "My mother, who was in her 70s, was also circumcised. Teenagers, and even infants, were circumcised. I don't understand these people."

As Muslim jihad warriors press their efforts to kill or convert all Christians in Indonesia, many Christians are forced to choose between their faith and their lives.

Sagat, who is Catholic, was born and raised on Kasiui island with her seven brothers and sisters. Until recently Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims lived peacefully on the island, even helping each other build places of worship.

Then the fighting began. "At first we did not believe when we heard about the bloody conflict in Ambon," she said. "We said it was impossible that our own friends and neighbors would attack us."

Jihad leaders from other islands began visiting Muslim villages on Kasiui last October. Christians did not realize until later that the leaders were pressuring local Muslims to attack their Christian neighbors. One of the first victims was Sagat's uncle.

While returning from a neighboring Muslim village he was surrounded and attacked by a mob. Bleeding from numerous machete and spear wounds, he somehow managed to return home.

"Still he told us not to take revenge," she said, but when Muslims murdered another Christian man, Sagat's Christian neighbors fled into the mountains.

Sagat's family stayed in the village until late November, when advancing mobs forced all Christians to seek refuge in the mountains. More than 260 people hiked an exhausting three days to escape the Muslim forces.

On the fourth day, they were discovered. Muslims urged the Christians to convert to Islam, and promised them protection from the jihad fighters.

"It's very hard for us," Sagat said, "but we finally decided to follow the Muslims to their village and do whatever they told us to do in order to save our lives."

When the Christians filed into the Muslim village they discovered their neighbors had lied. A crowd of people, including jihad warriors, lined the path leading to the mosque.

"I felt like we were just a group of hopeless sheep being led to a slaughter house," she said.

Once inside the mosque, Christians were forced to repeat the "Al Fatiha"



OPPRESSED FOR THEIR FAITH — On the Indonesian island of Ambon, hundreds of Christian men and women — young and old, even infants and pregnant women — have been forced to convert to Islam and be circumcised under threat of death. As Muslim jihad warriors press their efforts to kill or convert all Christians in Indonesia, many Christians are forced to choose between their faith and their lives. (Photo by Warren Johnson)

prayer, which is recited when a person accepts Islam. They were then stripped of their clothes, given a ritual washing and re-clothed in traditional Muslim garb.

Muslims searched the Christians' belongings and burned all copies of the Bible and rosary necklaces.

The women were sent to stay with local Muslim families while the men stayed in the mosque. It was then that the Christians were circumcised.

"All of us, men and women, young and

me," she said. "I saw my parents cry because they could not board the ship."

Sagat found refuge, but she is far from secure. "I don't know what to do with my future," she said.

"I guess the first thing to do is to find a way to get my parents off of the island, but I don't know how."

For more information about conditions in Indonesia, contact the International Mission Board's human needs office at (804) 219-1675.

Muslim woman apologizes for friend's forced conversion

AMBON, Indonesia (BP) — Many Muslims in Indonesia do not support nor condone the forced conversions that jihad warriors are enacting on Christians in the Maluku, a young Muslim woman wrote to her Christian friend.

Marian Abdulah expressed her horror and sorrow upon learning that her friend, Christina Sagat, had been subjected to a forced circumcision. A Muslim religious leader conducted the procedure on Sagat after she converted to Islam under threat of death.

"I feel very remorseful, and most Muslims feel the same way," she wrote. "Up to now we have not voiced our regret, but this does not mean we agree to these practices. We just feel sad and ashamed."

Abdulah, like many Muslims, was hesitant to believe horrific stories of Muslim crimes against Christians.

"I simply did not believe [the rumors], for my mind, like many other Muslims' minds, had been indoctrinated with the allegation that it is the Christians who always carry out [forced conversions], whereas we, Muslims, never do," Abdulah said.

She expressed her hope that the leading Muslim board of Indonesia would issue an apology on behalf of the Muslim community to the Christians who had been traumatized.

"However, this letter of mine will hardly influence them to take such a step," she wrote. "Faced with this situation we do not know what to say, especially what to say to you. We feel so utterly sorry that this had to befall you and your friends and your relatives."

Abdulah explained that the jihad was enforcing conversions and circumcisions in the hopes of transforming Indonesia into an Islamic nation.

"Apparently there are among us those who close their eyes to what was and is happening in countries like Iran and Afghanistan," she said. "Instead of peace there is chaos and despotism there."

She further explained that Islam is not to blame for the violence. Instead, the fighting is the result of people who misuse the Islamic religion to gain power.

Abdulah ended her letter by encouraging Sagat in her Christian faith.

"I am sure that Allah in whom we believe as the all merciful, who is full of love, will forgive you your renouncement which you did under pressure," she said. "The sin is not on you but on those who forced you to do this and who threatened your life."

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Life's priority

Mark 10:17-31

By Lori Clendinning

Leaving Perea, Jesus resumed his journey toward Jerusalem. Suddenly, a man rushed up and fell on his knees before him with questions regarding eternal life and how to obtain it.

Traditionally referred to as the "rich, young ruler," that title is a compilation from the three Gospel writers: Matthew states that the man was young, Luke says that he was a ruler, and Mark records that he was a man with great wealth.

Some historians believe he was Lazarus of Bethany who was later raised from the dead by Christ's resurrection power. Others claim he was a young man from the neighborhood temple. Because of the nature of his questions to Jesus, many presume that he was schooled in pharisaical thought.

Whoever he was, this man was a seeker of truth and earnest in his plea to Jesus regarding how to obtain eternal life. In verse 17, the man calls Jesus "Good Teacher."

Some scholars interpret the use of the word "good" as one might identify an English or economics professor: rather, a teacher of the "good." Stemming from pharisaical thought, doing good in order to gain eternal life was this man's obsession. Jesus' response—that "only God is good" (v. 18) and that no one can speak or act intelligently about goodness without looking to God for the standard—was meant to awaken in the man a sense of inadequacy regarding his own goodness.

As a devout Jew, this man had lived his life according to all that his religion had

required. However, the requirement that Jesus put before him was more challenging.

First, Jesus required that he break off of his old life by an act of extreme self-sacrifice: "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor" (v. 21). Alms-giving was considered a

pure achievement by all devout Jews, but this wealth-leveling act would scatter his worldly reserve and destroy his pride as a man of riches.

Secondly, Jesus directed the man to set out in a new life, that of a disciple. Jesus asked the man to deny himself of all that he possessed, give it to others as a principle of kingdom living, then unite with Christ as a wholly committed disciple. Jesus' emphasis was whether this religiously and morally right man had observed the commandments with the full conviction that only God is good and with the deep humility and spirituality which that thought should bring.

He wanted the man to come to a place where he would acknowledge that man cannot be good enough. Although his soul longed for something more, the man's life was a moral and outwardly religious one. He did not comprehend the difference of the eternal life of which Jesus spoke. Could he devote his wealth and life for the kingdom's sake?

Mark alone records the man's reaction as "sad" (v. 22); a word that translates as "lowering." At that moment, Jesus' requirement was too exacting for him. Although he was willing to "put his hand to the plow," he was looking too much at the things that would remain behind.

Christians often become rich, but sadly, the rich rarely become Christians. The process of gaining wealth encourages self-seeking. The possession of it encourages self-importance.

Plainly, it was not the man's riches that sent him away sorrowful, but it was his heart condition. It is that way with the heart of all,

whether rich or poor, who must choose between sin and God's kingdom.

Gaining entrance into God's kingdom is impossible by man's power. The worldly-minded man cannot enter the kingdom of the poor in spirit, nor the proud man enter the kingdom of the humble, without the transforming power of God Almighty. For with God, and God alone, are all things made possible (v. 27).

Only God has the capability to bring into his kingdom men who are spiritually incompatible with it. Even though a man's life may appear incredibly hopeless and unredeemable because of the sin with which he has engaged, God can transform that life into one worthy of his kingdom because of Christ's merciful act of substitutionary grace.

Obtaining God's grace and extending it to others is our priority. May we, through God's power, meet that challenge.

Clendinning is a former newspaper editor and a member of Park Place Church, Pearl.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Opposition

1 Samuel 26:1-31:13

By Jim Burnett

Following God faithfully these days can draw fire and criticism from different directions. Why? Because faith in the Lord motivates Christians to go against the grain of society, challenging the evils of the day. Thus, their stance for Christ will be questioned and countered by those who either do not know God or are out of his will.

Opposition is something all God's children will face and experience at one time or another while on this earth. Satan attempts to use conflict of every nature to hinder the children of God. Yet what we must remember is God uses friction as a tool for honing and shaping the redeemed into the image of Christ.

Through the uncomfortable and challenging times of our lives, we are invited by God to

trust him more and depend completely upon him.

Opposition of authorities (27:1, 6).

Saul's relentless pursuit of David had pushed David and his 600 men into Philistine territory. King Saul had misused his power and influence and turned Israel against God's newly anointed king. This, however, did not keep David from following God.

What if tomorrow you woke up to a country hostile toward Christianity and intolerant of people who possess faith in God? What if the laws of the land outlawed Christianity, church attendance, and Bible possession? How would it affect your commitment to God? David of the Old Testament faced strong opposition in serving the Lord. The New Testament Christians like-

wise faced severe persecution and opposition by the authorities, but strangely enough the Church of God flourished through these turbulent times. Therefore, against all odds and opposing forces, we, the children of God, must stay true to our Lord and Savior.

Opposition of allies (29:6-7).

As the Philistines assembled to fight Israel, David found himself in a difficult position. Would he fight his Hebrew countrymen, possibly wounding Saul whom he believed to be God's anointed? Or would he turn on the Philistines during the battle? The Philistine commanders chose not to give this giant killer the option and thus sent him home.

Sometimes God steps into our lives and narrows our options, keeping us from making unwise decisions. This day, perhaps, God spared David from doing something he would regret.

Opposition of enemies (30:3-4). Can you imagine driving home one day from work and

finding that your wife and children had been kidnapped? I can not think of a worse nightmare, and yet this was David's and his men's experience.

Following God invites Satan, his demons, and his children, to bring harm and grief to the children of God. Christians must expect and prepare for opposition from the prince of the air.

We must strap on the full armor of God daily. Though the devil shoots his fiery darts of discouragement and oppression our way, we must hold up the shield of faith and fight the good fight.

Opposition of friends (30:6). David's pain of losing his family to the Amalekites was compounded as his men talked of stoning him.

It is one thing to be opposed by the enemy, but when our friends become hostile, ultimate distress can occur. Physical and mental fatigue sets in, tempting us to quit.

David, however, did the opposite. Scripture records, "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." What a wonderful prescription for anxiety and distress! David truly cast all his anxiety upon God. In return the Lord

filled him with new strength and vigor. God's grace is truly sufficient and amazing.

Overcoming opposition with faith (30:8, 17-19). David not only regained his men's confidence as he followed God's instructions to confront the Amalekites, but he recovered all the Amalekites had taken including family and possessions. By faith David squared off against the Amalekites and defeated them.

Trusting God in and through every situation is what the Bible calls faith. We can not afford to live by circumstances and deal with life in our own strength.

Paul reminds us in Romans that we are more than conquerors in Christ. From a prison cell Paul penned these words: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Let me encourage you to trust God through the thick and thin. Regardless of the kind of opposition, struggle, or conflict you are facing today, invite God to be your mainstay. Then you, like David, will overcome opposition by faith, and your relationship with Jesus will grow stronger.

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,

no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted.

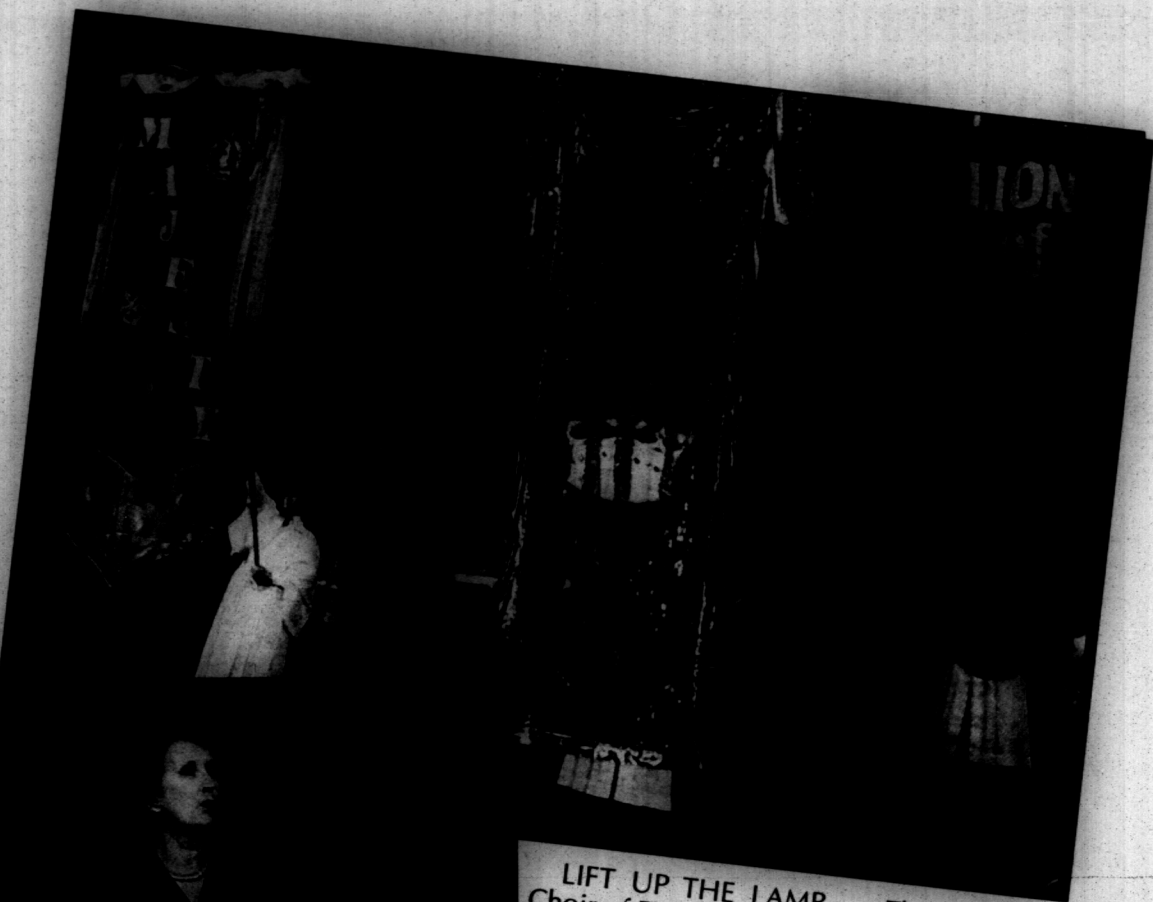
All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

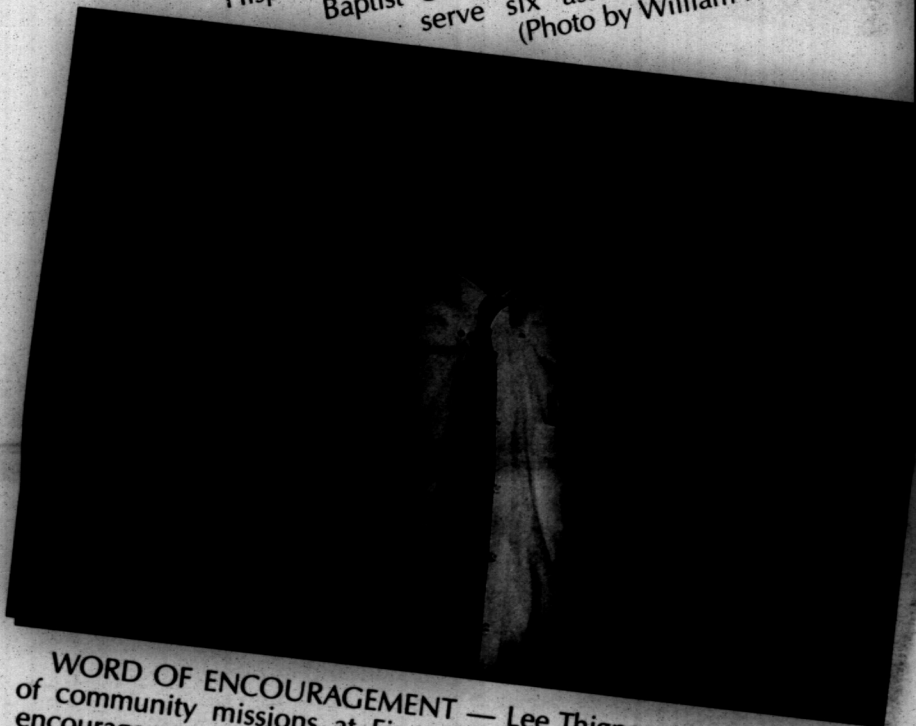
Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.



TESTIMONY GIVEN — Jorge Melendez (left) relates his testimony during the May 20 North American Mission Board missionary commissioning service at First Church, Jackson, while Carolyn (second from right) and Ted Stephens await the opportunity to offer their testimony. Melendez and his wife Ana were appointed to serve as Hispanic new work specialists with the Illinois State Baptist Convention, while the Stephenses will serve six associations in Michigan. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



LIFT UP THE LAMB — The Sanctuary Choir of First Church, Jackson, performs the song, Lift Up the Lamb, as banners are displayed in the foreground during the May 20 North American Mission Board missionary commissioning service at the church. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT — Lee Thigpen (middle), director of community missions at First Church, Jackson, offers a word of encouragement to new North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionaries Stanley Williams (left) and Leslie Sias after the May 20 NAMB missionary commissioning service at the church. Williams and his wife Trina will serve as collegiate evangelists in Chicago, while Sias and his wife Reva will serve as chaplain/community service specialists in Oklahoma City. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



PRAYER FOR MISSIONARIES — Vicki Heath, Woman's Missionary Union director at First Church, Jackson, asks congregants to join her in prayer for the 68 new missionaries appointed during the May 20 North American Mission Board missionary commissioning service at the church. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



PRAISE IN SONG — The Children's Ensemble of First Church, Jackson, accompanied by church pianist Eva Hart, offers praise in song during May 20 North American Mission Board missionary commissioning service at the church. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



RENEWING FRIENDSHIP — Keith Gordon (left), consultant in the Church Administration/Pastoral Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), visits with old friend Jim Bryant after the May 20 North American Mission Board missionary commissioning service at First Church, Jackson. Gordon worked with Bryant at the Missouri Baptist Convention prior to accepting the MBCB position. Bryant and his wife Virginia were appointed to serve as missionaries with the Missouri Baptist Convention. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



ONE IN THE BOND — Janet Hoffman (right) of Louisiana, national president of Woman's Missionary Union, joins hands at the close of the May 20 North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionary commissioning service at First Church, Jackson, with (from right after Hoffman) Frank Pollard, the church's senior pastor; Robert Reccord, NAMB president; and Randy Wood, NAMB director of missionary personnel. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)